Determination

Standards for Rangeland Health and Conformance with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

Field Office: Jarbidge Field Office	**Watershed Name:** Three Creek

Allotment Name/Number: Three Creek #8 / 1070

Public Land (acres)			**Streams on Public Land (miles)**:
Upland:	**Riparian:**	**Total:**	Three Creek (1.1 mi.)
4,782	4	4,786	

Date(s) of Field Assessment: 2002-03	**Name of Permittee(s):** Kip Gould

Assessment Participants (Name & Discipline or Interest):
Arnie Pike, Rangeland Management Specialist
James Klott, Wildlife Biologist
Clare Josaitis, Natural Resource Specialist
John Ash, Natural Resource Specialist
Sheri Hagwood, Botanist
Patricia Courtney, Range Technician

Standard 1 (Watersheds)
Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

☐ Standard doesn't apply	
X Meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are **not** Significant Factors.
X Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	☐ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s).

Rationale/Information Sources:

The Allotment is f the sites assessed were noted to be within none to slight deviation from expected and all indicators were being met. This means that flow patterns were few with slight deposition and surface litter was in place. There was little evidence of plant pedestaling due to

water or wind erosion. There was minimal soil crusting and no evidence of a compaction layer. Bare ground was slightly higher than expected, and soil surface resistance to erosion was lower. This was evidenced by wind scour and deposition areas, and reduced soil surface aggregation. This may be in part due to the recent wildfire.

Standard 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

☐ Standard doesn't apply	
☐ Meeting the Standard.	X Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are **not** Significant Factors.
☐ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	X Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s). 5

Rationale/Information Sources:

Three Creek segment 11.8 to 12.1 is typically heavily used by livestock. Much of the floodplain and stream banks are grazed to bare ground. These barren areas plus the livestock trails along the creek, supply sediment to the creek. Only where willows are present is the stream bank vegetation comprised of those plants that have roots capable of withstanding high stream flows. The stream channel is not stable laterally and the channel is cutting increasingly wider during high energy flows. Point bars are not re-vegetating. Woody vegetation within the riparian zone, including willows, currant, and rose, have been heavily browsed. Decadent willows are the dominant age class for riparian woody species. Desirable riparian herbaceous species are basically non-existent in this stretch; exotic annuals are present to the water's edge. The stream channel is too wide, too shallow, and consequently, the riparian zone is very minimal. Excessive livestock trampling is largely the cause of the channel braiding.

Three Creek segment 12.1 to 12.3 is downcut approximately two to four feet in some areas, and the width-depth ratio is altered. Flows are quickly flushing down the channel, resulting in a narrowing of the riparian zone. Livestock trailing along the creek, raw cutbanks, and a road dissecting the creek are contributing to degradation of the riparian resource. Stream bank erosion is on the excessive side. The age class of willows and aspens in the area is primarily mature or decadent; very few young willows are present. Upland herbaceous plants comprise most of the species in the riparian zone; a couple of sedge species are present. Woody vegetation provides most of the stream bank protection. The upland herbaceous plants along the stream banks are shallowly-rooted and provide little protection during high flows. Cheatgrass and exotic annual plants are a problem in some areas. Lateral stream movement is more

associated with livestock trampling than with natural stream sinuosity. The stream in this segment typically flows in the subsurface, and may totally dry up by late summer.

Three Creek segment 12.3 to 12.9 is a confined channel and most of this creek is inaccessible to livestock; cattle use in this area is minimal. This portion of the creek usually dries up by the end of summer. This segment contains a lot of large cobbles, boulders, and woody debris, as well as a large amount of woody vegetation (willow, aspen, rose chokecherry, and dogwood), which help anchor the stream banks. There is good representation of all age classes among woody species. Several different species of sedge and rush are occupying the stream banks, although more herbaceous species should be present in greater densities in this system. The herbaceous component present exhibits high vigor and has seedheads. Stream banks are well covered and stable and are able to sustain high stream flows.

Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Floodplain)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

☐ Standard doesn't apply	
☐ Meeting the Standard.	X Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are **not** Significant Factors.
☐ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	X Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s). 7

Rationale/Information Sources:

(Refer to discussion in Standard 2)

Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

☐ Standard doesn't apply	
X Meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are **not** Significant Factors.
X Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	☐ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s).

Rationale/Information Sources:

There is some slight deviation from the indicators of this Standard. This deviation is shown by the low composition of perennial grasses and forbs in Pasture 2. The deviation is not enough to represent not meeting the Standard in the Allotment as a whole.

Site TC8-3 burned in the mid-1990's. The permittee at that time broadcast seeded some crested wheatgrass. The bulk of the plants present are native.

Standard 5 (Seedings)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

☐ Standard doesn't apply	
X Meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are **not** Significant Factors.
☐ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	☐ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s). 9

Rationale/Information Sources:

The intermediate wheatgrass seeding in Pasture 1 has only slight deviation s from the indicators including a sparse composition of cheatgrass.

Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities, Other than Seedings)
Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

X Standard doesn't apply	
☐ Meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are **not** Significant Factors.
☐ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	☐ Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s).

Rationale/Information Sources:

Standard 7 (Water Quality)
Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

☐ Standard doesn't apply	
☐ Meeting the Standard.	X Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are **not** Significant Factors.
☐ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	X Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s). 10

Rationale/Information Sources:

The State's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has identified and nominated the entire length of Three Creek, from its head waters to the confluence at Clover Creek (all but one mile outside the allotment) as "water quality limited" and is included on the 1996-98 303(d) lists in Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) #17050102 for concerns of sediments, however severity of this concern is rated as low. A brief water quality summary discussion of this upper creek segment concludes that; maximum and minimum daily water temperatures have not exceeded the standard of 22° C and 19° C, respectively, for a cold water biota stream for the two years that were monitored. All other water quality attributes (particularly pH and DO) have been within the State's water quality limits. And for the record, monitoring for a longer period of time, from

1995-2002 in the lower segment of this creek, well below the allotment, concludes that the only real standard NOT being met was the maximum daily temperature limitation. This standard has been exceeded many days during the months of July and August. This is most likely due to the lower flows encountered during the hottest months. And as with the upper segment, all other water quality attributes of the lower segment have been within State limits as well. No biological water parameters have been monitored by the BLM in this creek

Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals)

Check those that apply:[*One or more boxes must be checked.*]

☐ Standard doesn't apply	
☐ Meeting the Standard.	X Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are Significant Factors.
☐ Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress to meeting the Standard.	☐ Not Meeting the Standard, Livestock Grazing Management Practices are **not** Significant Factors.
☐ Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.	X Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Guideline No(s). 11

Rationale/Information Sources:

Shrub cover and height were adequate for sage grouse nesting in the native areas. The forb component was diverse at two of native site and contained several sage grouse preferred forbs in adequate numbers. The forb component in the seedings were less diverse and less abundant, however, plants in the *Phlox* genus were the most common native forbs.

Redband trout are known to be present in Three Creek. In the early 1980's, redband trout were present in Three Creek within this allotment. There is only 0.5 miles of Three Creek within the allotment that is not meeting this Standard. This segment, while being a low percentage of the entire stream, may have an effect on the redband trout population.

No plants presently on the BLM sensitive plant species list are known to occur in the Three Creek #8 Allotment. Broad fleabane, a species formerly on the Idaho BLM Sensitive list is present. This species is still on the Nevada BLM sensitive species list. It was unknown whether the standard was being met for special status plant species. There was no information available to determine whether livestock grazing management was having a significant impact on sensitive plant species or not.

Determination

I have determined that the applicable Standards for Rangeland Health 1, 4 and 5 are being met in the Three Creek #8 Allotment. Standards 2, 3, 7 and 8 are not being met and are not making significant progress and current livestock grazing practices are a significant factor. Current livestock practices do not conform with some of the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

/s/ E. Guerrero _____ 5/12/04
Field Manager Date